

Storm Water Pollution

Storm water is runoff from rain and snowmelt. Under natural conditions, this water seeps into the ground. In urban areas, this water flows over impervious surfaces (paved areas and building rooftops), does not percolate into the ground and accumulates debris, chemicals, sediment or other pollutants.

Did You Know?

- ◆ That there are an estimated 74.8 million dogs owned in the United States, which create 72.5 billion pounds of dog waste every year!
- ◆ That just one gram of pet waste contains an average of 23 million fecal coliform bacteria. Some of these bacteria can cause serious gastrointestinal infections, as well as infections of the ear, eye, and throat in humans.
- ◆ That as pet waste decomposes, it demands a high level of oxygen from water. This demand can suffocate fish and plant life by reducing the amount of oxygen available to them.

What is the City's Role in Storm Water?

In recognition of the importance that each of us has on the quality of local water bodies like the Bronx River and the Long Island Sound, the City has implemented a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP). The City's SWMP includes the following six program components:

- ◆ Public education and outreach
- ◆ Public participation and involvement
- ◆ Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- ◆ Construction site runoff control
- ◆ Post-construction storm water management
- ◆ Municipal pollution prevention and good housekeeping

The goal of the City's SWMP is to reduce impacts of storm water runoff thereby improving water quality, enhancing recreational enjoyment, preventing beach closures, and ensuring that seafood is safer to eat.

City of White Plains
Department of Public Works
Phase II Storm Water
Management Program

Surface Water Quality Series:

Pet Waste and Storm Water



*How you can
prevent local
water pollution!*



Throwing Pet Waste in Storm Sewers is Illegal!!!

Federal, New York State and Local Municipal regulations prohibit illegal or “illicit discharges” to storm sewer systems and are punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.

Bagged or unbagged pet waste thrown in storm sewer grates, openings, drains, or manholes is an example of an illicit discharge, which is a major cause of water pollution.



The Problem

Storm sewers are not connected to wastewater treatment plants or septic systems like the drains in your home.

When pet waste is tossed into a storm drain or left on the sidewalk, street or yard, it is carried by rainwater through the storm sewer system directly into our local water bodies, without any treatment!

Pet waste is a threat to human and environmental health because it contains harmful bacteria and pathogens, some of which can cause serious diseases in humans.

Pet waste also contains many other nutrient pollutants, which contribute to excessive algae growth in a water body, upsetting the delicate balance of the natural habitat.

The Solution

Being a responsible pet owner means picking up after your pet. Here is how you can properly dispose of your pet’s waste and prevent local water pollution:

- ◆ **Flush It:** The best way to dispose of pet waste is to flush it down the toilet. Just remember to remove the waste from the bag or the litter before putting it in the toilet.
- ◆ **Scoop the Poop:** Bag it and put it in the trash. Landfills are designed to safely handle substances such as dog waste and cat litter.